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TWO

DISCOURSES

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PREACHED BEFORE

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

IN MEDFORD;

ONE

UPON LEAVING THE OLD CHURCH;

AND ONE

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW.

BY CALEB STETSON,
Minister of the Society.

Boston:
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A DISCOURSE

ON

TAKING LEAVE OF THE OLD CHURCH,

DELIVERED ON

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1839.

DISCOURSE I.*

UPON LEAVING THE OLD CHURCH.

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1 Chronicles, xvii, 1.

Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that he said to Nathan, the prophet, Lo! I dwell in a house of cedars, but the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.

This is the expression of a very natural feeling. The minstrel king was fervent and imaginative, full of poetic inspiration and of holy zeal for the worship of the God of Israel. As he sat in his apartments, surrounded with all the magnificence of Eastern Royalty, he painfully felt the contrast between the grandeur of his own palace and the lowliness of the Tabernacle, that sheltered the consecrated Ark of the Covenant.

There are few persons of any devout sentiment, who do not sympathize with the feelings of David. We know indeed that there is a temple not made with hands, holier than any which is built of wood and stones. There the Divine Presence most intimately dwells; and there is the Altar of Sacrifice, that never moulders away by age nor is broken down by violence. The

* This Discourse, which was delivered in two parts on account of its length, is now printed as one.

visible Temple is the outward sign of God's presence; in the soul of every pure worshipper is the Divine Reality. It is not then the costliness or beauty of the shrine, but the holiness of the offering, that the Father regards. But there is an instinct of the soul that will not thus be reasoned down. We feel somewhat of self-reproach, when we see our private dwellings fitted up more expensively and tastefully than the house of the Most High. We are like Hebrew worshippers, who should lead to the sacrifice, the lame, the sickly and the worthless among the lambs of their flock. Our pious forefathers, who founded our churches in the wilderness, and cherished them as their highest joy and dearest hope, had but small and mean buildings for their public devotions. But then their own habitations were smaller and meaner still. These warrior saints of New-England were content to live in rude cabins, inartificially constructed of rough logs. The best they had, they devoted to God. Their Meeting-house, — the erection of which was commonly the first enterprise that united their exertions — built with a substantial frame-work, and covered with unplaned and unpainted boards, rose amongst the humbler private dwellings, in comparative splendor; as the ordinary farm-house of civilized man would be a palace in a nation of savages.

The tastes and wants of man vary with times and circumstances. All the works of his hand wax old and decay. The noblest structures of one generation are superseded and removed as unfit to satisfy the wishes or necessities of another. "The fashion of this world must pass away." Let it pass away then without complaint. Let each successive age be the judge of its own wants. Let the edifices, that begin to crumble

and totter under the heavy hand of time, be displaced by others which may better answer their end.

There are old things, however, from which we cannot disengage ourselves without painful emotion, though we know they are to be succeeded by something better. It is to me, my friends, a solemn and affecting consideration, — how much more so, to you, who have come up here to worship from your earliest years, — that this is our last meeting within these venerable walls. But we yield to the irresistible tendency of all things made by man; they gradually decay, crumble and moulder into dust. Our greatest care could only, for a few years, have put off the ruin to which this Temple of God is hasting, in common with all earth-made structures. Let it pass away then, this House of our devotions, round which holy remembrances and associations have so long been gathering. But not unregretted and unhonored can it pass and be forgotten. Not like a shattered and ill-favored shed, can we bear to see it broken down and thrust aside with cold indifference. We would give it a reverent and affectionate farewell. It may be interesting to employ the last hours we are permitted to enjoy here, in looking into some memorials of the past with which this edifice connects us.

The plantation of Medford was begun in 1630, the same year in which Boston was founded. It was at first called Meadford, probably from a fordway across the river in a mead, or meadow, a little above the place where the draw-bridge has since been built. Some however suppose, with equal show of reason, that it was named for one John Mead, who lived near the ford and occasionally assisted travellers in their passage. This important question I am wholly incompetent to

decide. Of the early transactions of the settlement but few and scanty notices are preserved, as its records, down to 1674, have been destroyed, it is believed, by fire. The present occasion, however, does not call for many historical details, except such as relate to the town in its ecclesiastical character.

Deputy Governor Dudley, speaking of the Colonists who came from England and arrived in Massachusetts Bay in 1630, says, "Some of us planted upon Mistic, which we named Meadford." This name was given to a considerable tract, lying along both sides the river, a part of which is now included within the limits of Charlestown. Within two years from its settlement, Meadford became so considerable as to bear its part of the public expenses of the Colony. Yet for more than eighty years it had no organized church or settled ministry. It is difficult to account for a deficiency so unusual at that period, when it was the first concern of our fathers, in their severest straits, to have a pious, gifted and faithful ministry. "It was as unnatural," says Johnson, in his Wonder Working Providence, "for a right New-England man to live without an able ministry, as for a Smith to work his iron without a fire." It would seem that Medford was not too poor to support the institutions of religion, which were then justly deemed of vital importance to the well-being of a Society; for the Colony Registers shew that it was superior in wealth,* within the first eight years of its

* The early prosperity of the plantation, may be inferred from the following Note to Gov. Winthrop's Journal, "Of a tax of £1500 levied by the General Court in 1637, the proportion paid by Medford was £52 10*s*.

The proportion of Boston was £233 10*s*.; Ipswich, £180; Salem, £170 10*s*.; Dorchester, £140; Charlestown, £138; Roxbury, £115; Watertown, £110; Newton, £106; Lynn, £105.

existence, to several ancient towns which were furnished with regular ministers.

But whatever may have been the cause of the deficiency, it is certain that the consequences were most disastrous. The settlement languished for many years; its prosperity was checked, and its population increased but slowly; the inhabitants were much divided among themselves; and several times they were prosecuted and fined for not having a ministry established according to law. For in these early days, when the spirit of the puritans endeavored to embody, in this new world, its idea of a true theocracy, the province watched with parental solicitude over the spiritual well-being of her children, — now kindly encouraging and helping them to sustain the institutions of religion, — now severely rebuking them, punishing them even, for neglecting to help themselves.

Mr. Matthew Cradock, carried on the first plantation,* and he had also extensive fisheries in that part of Mystic, which is now called Medford, on the north side of the river. He is often called Governor Cradock; and his name appears in some of the Annual Registers, as the first Chief Magistrate of the colony. But this is a mistake. He was in fact only the head of a commercial company in England, nor is it known that he ever came to this country himself.

The first governor of Massachusetts Bay, was John Winthrop, called by Cotton Mather in his Magnalia, the "American Nehemiah," who came to this country in 1630. He was a man of wealth and education,

* Mr. Cradock's estate was in the east part of the town, including the beautiful farm now owned by Messrs. James & Isaac Wellington. After a few years he seems to have abandoned his establishments here.

equally eminent for his talents and his virtues. For several years he resided during the summer at his house on the south side of the river. "The Court of Assistance in 1631, granted to Mr. Governor six hundred acres of land, to be set forth by metes and bounds, near his house in Mistic, to enjoy to him and his heirs forever." This place he called the "Ten Hills Farm," a name which it bears to this day. This great and good man, who was loved and revered in his own time, and is now honored in his descendants, may justly be regarded as the founder * of Medford, or Mistic as it was also called from the river which runs through it. The whole of this territory which lies south of the river, was afterwards annexed to Charlestown, to which it belonged till 1755, when that portion of it, which now belongs to Medford, was set off to it by an act of the General Court.

This town had no representation† in the Colonial

* The following passages from Governor Winthrop's Journal intimate his connexion with this place. "Thursday, 1st June, 1630. We went to Massachusetts to find out a place for our sitting down. We went up Mistic River, in a boat, about six miles."

"1631, July 4. The Governor built a bark at Mistic, which was launched this day, and called the Blessing of the Bay. Aug. 9, the same year, the Governor's bark, being of thirty tons, went to sea."

This arduous effort in the way of ship-building, was the first in the annals of Medford, and, I believe, the first in Massachusetts Colony. It was, no doubt, an enterprise of more difficulty than is now the building of one of those magnificent packet ships, which are so often launched in our waters.

"Oct. 30th, 1631. The Governor having erected a building of stone at Mistic, there came so violent a storm of rain, for twenty-four hours, that (it being not finished and laid with clay for want of lime,) two sides of it were washed down to the ground, and much harm was done to the other houses by that storm."

† About the year 1689, the inhabitants of Medford petitioned the Legislature for an act of incorporation, with the privilege of being represented in the General Court. The answer to the petition was, that "the town had been incorporated along with the other towns in the province, by a general act passed in 1630. And under this act, it had at any time a right to organize itself and choose a representative, without further legislation." It seems, therefore, that Medford was both a town and a parish in 1630,— about sixty years before it recognised itself as such. Will not this neglect of organization account for its want of early records, without the accident of fire?

Legislature until about the year 1690, "when Lieutenant Peter Tufts was chosen to that office, and it was voted to pay him *eighteen pence* a day so long as he shall attend the General Court." Nor does it appear that there was any public school till early in the next century, when "Mr. Henry Davison was chosen to keep school for said town for one quarter of a year. Voted also to allow Mr. Davison the sum of three pounds money for keeping school the time above-stated, and also to diet him for the same." This appears to have been the first germ in this place of the public school system, which has since grown into a matter of so much interest and importance to our community. It is amusing to observe, from this distance of time, the economical spirit indicated by these arrangements in behalf of legislation and good learning. We are apt, however, to underrate the liberality of our ancestors, when we take into account only the nominal pecuniary value which they set upon intellectual labor. It must be considered, that in relation to the means, wants and habits of life, money was then worth five or six times as much as it is in these days of opulence and lavish expenditure. Our ancestors were a frugal people; but there is a frugality that is not good economy. The community that withholds the means of culture from the rising generation, withholds the bread of life from the hungry. Let them be careful and circumspect in their outlay; let them save, pinch, stint themselves as they will; but let them not stint and starve the minds and souls of their children.

I make these remarks, however, with no intention to reproach the men of another age. If they had no public schools, I have no doubt that they supported private

institutions of learning according to their ability. The spirit of the age and country would not have suffered them to neglect this duty. The fathers of New-England in the seventeenth century made the education of the whole people their great concern. Their means were small, but their good will was great. They denied themselves, they higgled with their appetites, they drove hard bargains with their housekeeping, that they might have wherewithal to train up the young in morality, religion, and sound knowledge. They gladly threw their two mites into the treasury of wisdom when it was all their living. How resolutely, and with what heroic self-sacrifice did they exert themselves, in times of severest privation, to establish and endow the college,— which was so long the object of their prayer and hope,— "to the end" — as they beautifully said — "that good learning may not be buried in the graves of our fathers."

These early sacrifices in the cause of education were not acts of public bodies, or gifts of the rich from their superfluity, but free-will offerings of a whole people. The virtuous and enlightened poor came up with generous enthusiasm, bringing the products of their labor and self-denial,— often in shape of articles of furniture, which they could, or could not well spare from their poorly-furnished habitations. Often they contributed money, in sums so small that they would now excite a smile. But these lowly offerings of poverty indicate a noble spirit in men, worthy to become the fathers of a great nation. And while they so affectionately nourished the College, they did not neglect the humbler institutions of learning. In the midst of want and suffering, and surrounded by a savage wilderness and more

savage enemies, they laid the deep and broad foundations of that common school system which is the glory and hope of the country,— the nursery of intelligence, freedom and virtue.

It cannot be supposed that the inhabitants of Mystic, living hard by the metropolis of this wise and enlightened people, were indifferent to the great interest which lay so near the hearts of their brother colonists. They could not have passed the greater part of a century without *any* schools for their children. Undoubtedly they had means of education which do not appear in their records. The documents which have survived the waste of accident and time, show no want of practical ability, no deficiency in the accomplishments which a common school is expected to bestow. The leading men, who filled the various offices in the town, appear always to have been persons of more than ordinary capacity and endowment.

I come now to the period when the town of Medford assumes the character of a Parish, and its ecclesiastical history begins. Before the year 1690, the people, having no regular church or constant preaching, attended public worship in the neighboring towns. But from this time their records show that they were zealous and anxious to secure a settled ministry of the gospel; and they were willing to make liberal appropriations to maintain it. Cut off as they were from all convenient* access to the means of grace, they severely felt

* The following anecdote, related with much simplicity in Governor Winthrop's Journal, is an amusing illustration of the inconvenience of going out of town to attend public worship, especially when a deep tide water without a bridge lies in the way. "One Dankin and his wife, dwelling near Meadford, coming from Cambridge, where they had spent their Sabbath, and being to pass over the river at a ford, the tide not being fallen enough, the husband adventured over and finding it too deep, persuaded his wife to stay awhile. But it raining very sore she would needs adventure over, and was carried away with the

the disadvantages of their condition. They could not enjoy the order and godly peace of a well-organized Christian people. A civil community without a church is a body without a soul. It is "without God in the world," when the Divinity is manifest in no religious institutions. The culture and salvation of souls requires some visible embodiment of the religious idea. The means of grace must be brought near, and made objects of our personal care and solicitude, or their influence will never flow through the great heart of society. If they must be looked for in other towns, beyond the sphere of our local interests and our social affections, they will be irregularly sought and unprofitably used. They should ever stand out prominently among the objects that most engage our attention and sympathy. Our children should be reared under the droppings of the sanctuary, that their earliest culture may be hallowed by devout reverence for God, His truth and His authority. They should see the venerable elders bowing in lowly and grateful worship to the Supreme Benefactor, and their whole being, mind, heart, speech, action pervaded and inspired by divine sentiments and principles. Then only will filial piety become an early habit of the soul, when religious establishments stand interwoven with the business and pleasure, the joy and sorrow of every-day life, and the genius of the place is instinct with the spirit of reverence and devotion. Thus a whole community is bathed in an atmosphere of holiness, and breathes in Heavenly influences. God is in the midst of His peo-

stream past her depth. Her husband not daring to go and help her, cried out and thereupon his dog came forth from his house near by, and seeing something in the water, swam to her, and she caught hold of the dog's tail, so he drew her to the shore and saved her life."

ple, bodied forth in their institutions, and manifest to their souls through the visible symbols of His presence; and they are brought up at the feet of Infinite Wisdom.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century the ecclesiastical history of this community began to develope itself. For many years from that time the town records are chiefly occupied with religious affairs, such as the employment of preachers, and the making of arrangements for the building of a meeting-house, and a parsonage. The town had never yet had a regular minister, though attempts had been made to settle one in its very infancy. Within four years after its first settlement, the celebrated James Noyes, afterwards minister of Newbury, preached in this place about a year. "He was born at Choulderton in Wiltshire, of godly parents, in 1608. His father was a minister in the same town. He was educated at Oxford University, and emigrated to New-England in 1634, and when he arrived he was immediately called to preach at Mistic, which he did for nearly a year. He was much beloved and respected, a very holy and Heavenly-minded man, and as much mortified to the world as almost any in it. He scarce called any thing his own, but his books and clothes. He was a man of singular qualifications, in piety excelling, an implacable enemy to all heresy and schism, and a most able warrior against the same. He was of a reaching and ready apprehension, a most profound judgment, a rare, tenacious and comprehensive memory, fixed and unmovable in his grounded conceptions,—sure in words and speech, without rashness, — gentle and mild in all expressions, without any passion or provoking language. He was of so loving, compassionate and humble carriage, that, I believe,

never any were acquainted with him but did desire the continuance of his society and acquaintance. He was resolute for truth, and in defence thereof had no respect for persons. He was courageous in dangers, and still was apt to believe the best, and made fair weather in a storm. He was much honored and esteemed in the country, and his death was greatly bewailed. I think he may be reckoned among the greatest worthies of this age." *

Such was the first preacher of the gospel in this town, and it does not appear that he had any successor for nearly sixty years. From 1693 to 1712, various ministers were employed; several of whom were called to a permanent settlement, and a provision made for their support, which, in those days, might be deemed liberal. None of them, however, accepted the invitation, on account of certain difficulties and dissensions hinted at, but not explained in the town records. The first of these candidates was Mr. John Hancock, grandfather to the celebrated John Hancock, so well known in the history of the Revolution. He received a call but did not accept it; and was soon after settled in Lexington, where he labored in the work of the ministry for more than fifty years, enjoying such consideration and influence among the clergy that he was usually called Bishop Hancock. In his own parish he was reverenced as the father and ruler of his people. He was in the habit of settling all manner of questions and controversies among them, such as are now carried into courts of justice, in the most summary way, with the authority of an absolute prince; and the parties cheerfully acquiesced

* See a long account of him in Mather's Magnalia, written by his friend, the Rev. Mr. Parker, and his nephew, Nicholas Noyes, minister of Salem.

in his decisions; for he was a good and wise man, and all the people loved and honored him.* The next preacher in this town, who received a call, was Dr. Colman, settled afterwards over Brattle Street Church in Boston. He became eminent in the profession, and was elected President of the College in 1724, but declined the office. He was succeeded by Mr. Simon Bradstreet, afterwards a distinguished minister in Charlestown. He preached in Medford about a year, but declined an invitation to settle here permanently. The Rev. John Tufts and several others were engaged as temporary preachers, and received calls, but yet no settled minister was obtained.

In 1698, Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge was invited to preach in Medford, with a view to a permanent settlement. He continued to supply the pulpit for nearly ten years. And he seems to have performed the duties of a pastor without being legally settled in the ministry, for I find his record of baptisms, running through the whole period of his ministerial labors. A dark cloud has settled over the memory of this person, which I am not able to penetrate. His connexion with the town seems to have been unhappy; his ministry was unquiet, and his reputation remains equivocal. There was much discussion about him in town-meetings, and evidentl a great deal of dissatisfaction. But no definite charges against him are recorded; and nothing appears by which he can be either acquitted or con-

* There are still traditions of him in Lexington, which show the veneration in which he was held. In his time disputes about the boundaries of land were not infrequent. When a difficulty of this kind arose between two neighbors, Mr. H. would call upon the parties and tell them to follow him. When he came upon the debated ground he would patiently examine the facts of the case, hear all they had to say, and then set up the landmarks with his own hand, and tell them "to go home and live in peace, and serve God." His judgments were final; no appeals were made from them.

demned. Frequent attempts for several years were made to give him a legal settlement, but always some unexplained difficulty sprung up to prevent it. The town had voted him a salary from year to year, and raised a considerable sum by taxation to build a parsonage for his use. Then there were controversies, now unintelligible, between him and some of the carpenters, who were employed to build the house; and also between him and the town's committee, growing out of obscure pecuniary transactions. These seem to have embittered his connexion with the people, and prevented his ordination from time to time, whenever he or his friends undertook to urge it. Two or three times, a formal protest against his ministry was entered on the town books by some of the most respectable inhabitants. But in vain. They could neither settle him nor remove him. For several years meeting after meeting was held, and vote after vote was passed, now to dismiss him, now to ordain him; but always a resolute protest was entered against either measure. How strong the tie was between minister and people at that period, may be inferred from the fact, that Mr. Woodbridge's friends protested against dismissing him on the ground "that a town has no power to dismiss its minister," though as yet he appears to have been invited only to preach as a candidate. He often expressed his wish to be ordained, but the painful controversies which created so much uneasiness remained unsettled, and the people without a pastor.

The matter was referred to a council of churches, which decided that "Mr. Woodbridge should be dismissed and another minister obtained." From this result of council an appeal was made to the General Court,

which decreed that "Mr. Woodbridge was not legally the minister of Medford, and *ordered* the town to settle another without delay." Such was the authority exerted by the government of the province in the early part of the last century! The town immediately took measures to comply with the order; and meanwhile, "*humbly begged the General Court not to impose a minister upon them without their consent!*" Mr. Woodbridge was dismissed from his ministry, but never removed from the town. He died * here soon after in 1710.

Three candidates were then nominated to the town, of which one was to be settled as the permanent minister. They were Amos Chevers, John Tufts, and Aaron Porter. Mr. Porter was chosen, and was ordained, the first regular minister of this town, Feb. 11, 1713, about eighty-three years after its settlement. It seems strange to us that, in an age when the ministrations of the Gospel were so highly appreciated, this town should have remained so long destitute of them. There were, however, in the Colony, other instances of the same kind. The ancient and important towns of Marblehead and Portsmouth, had no regular churches or ministers for about fifty years after their first settlement. To the want of religious institutions, the slow growth of Medford, its unprosperous condition, and the great difficulty it met with in obtaining a min-

* From the following extract from Judge Sewall's manuscipt Journal, it would seem that Mr. Woodbridge did not lose his ministerial character by being dismissed.

"January 15 1709 Mr Benj. Woodbridge died at Meadford. Thursday 19 buried Mr Parsons at Malden preached the funeral sermon. Bearers, President (of College), Mr Hobart of Newton, Mr Brattle, Mr Bradstreet, Mr Parsons, Mr Ruggles of Billericay. By reason that it was lecture day and Mr Colman preached and the wind very high and blustering not one Boston minister was there."

For some extracts from this Journal, relating to Mr. Woodbridge and Mr. Porter, I am indebted to Rev. Mr. Sewall, of Burlington, a descendant of the Judge.

ister, have been reasonably attributed. The beginning of a long period of harmony and prosperity had now arrived. During the times of three successive ministers, extending over more than a century, "the church had rest and was edified;" the people were in a thriving state, "and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

On the day of Mr. Porter's ordination, a church was organized and a covenant adopted, by which the brethren agreed to walk together, as disciples of Jesus, in Christian love and fidelity, "keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." This covenant was conceived in a spirit of liberality truly evangelical, making no mention of those points of doctrine, which have since been so strenuously insisted upon as conditions of Christian communion. It was signed the same day by fifteen male members who had all belonged to churches in the neighboring towns.

January 24, 1722, Mr. Porter died after a ministry of a little less than nine years.* He was graduated at Harvard University in 1708. What manner of man he was, what were his gifts, graces and attainments, there is neither record nor tradition to tell. That his short ministry was a happy and a useful one may well be supposed, for it has no history, save what was written in the souls of those who received from him the "words of Eternal life." His answer to the call of the town, and his account of the feelings and purposes with which

* I cannot ascertain when or where he was born. The following extracts contain all that can be know of him except his own brief records in the church books. "1721--22 Jan 24, Mr Brattle told me that Mr Aaron Porter ye desirable pastor of ye ch in Meadford was dead of a fever, which much grieved me." Judge Sewall's MS. Journal.

"1721--22 Jan 23 The Rev Minister of Meadford dies, Mr Porter, which married Unkle Sewall's daughter."—MS. Journal of S. Sewall Esq., of Brookline.

he entered upon the work of the ministry, show him to have been a man of faith, of fervent piety, and of a sound and thoughtful mind. They breathe the very spirit of meekness, holiness and love. A dim outline appears through the mists which have gathered over the distant past; but indistinct and shadowy as it is, it reveals an image of great spiritual beauty.

Mr. Ebenezer Turell was ordained as successor to Mr. Porter the 25th of November, 1724. He was born in Boston in the year 1701, and graduated at Harvard College in 1721. His ministry was long and tranquil, disturbed by no divisions or tumults among his people. President Allen in his Biographical Dictionary says of him, "He was an eminent preacher, of a ready invention, a correct judgment, and fervent devotion, who delivered divine truth with animation, and maintained discipline in his church with boldness tempered by prudence." Of these great qualities, however, I can find no evidence. Many of my aged hearers remember him as he appeared in the latter years of his life; but there is no memory or tradiuon that he had any uncommon learning or endowments.* His orthodoxy, according to the received opinions of his time, was unimpeached and unimpeachable, but he was neither a bigot nor a fanatic. He was remarkable for personal beauty and the accomplishments of a gentle-

* A story is told of him from which it might be inferred that he was a gifted speaker. When Whitfield was preaching in this vicinity, and drawing multitudes after him, Mr. Turell, in common with the most eminent divines of the country, looked with distrust and apprehension upon his eccentric and tumultuous movements. One week a report was circulated that Mr. W. was to preach in Medford the next Sunday. He did not come; a stranger from Malden came to hear him, but instead of him, heard Mr. Turell, without knowing the person of either. Accordingly he went home exceedingly moved and edified, supposing he had heard the great Mr. Whitfield; nor did he cease to talk in raptures about his "wonderful preaching," until, several weeks after, he accidentally discovered his mistake. I suppose there is nothing very extraordinary in a delusion of this kind. When a man is in search of the marvellous, he is apt to find what he looks for.

man, — a social, vivid, genial man, who enjoyed society and contributed largely to its pleasure; yet nowise neglecting the duties of a devout, earnest and faithful minister of Christ. The society flourished and increased greatly during his time. He died in 1778, in the 77th year of his age, and the 54th of his ministry. For four or five years before his death, the town employed other preachers to supply the pulpit, whenever the infirmities of age rendered him unable to perform the services. And on the 14th of September, 1774, Mr. Osgood was ordained over the church and society as his colleague pastor.

David Osgood, D. D., was born at Andover, October 25th, 1747, and graduated at Harvard University in 1771. On leaving college he devoted himself to the work of the ministry, and pursued his theological studies at Cambridge. He was one of the most distinguished men of his time, — of a character so strong, decided and original, that for many years he occupied a commanding position, and exerted great influence in the community. He gave the best affections of his heart, and all the strength of his gifted and highly cultivated mind, to the cause of truth and righteousness. He was what may be called a *whole* man; there was no temporizing, or halfness in his soul, — none in his life. He was free from all guile. He followed with unconquerable firmness, the convictions of his own mind and conscience. So little was he disposed to disguise his sentiments or qualify the expression of them for the sake of pleasing, that not unfrequently he appeared abrupt and rough in his address. He was an *honest* man, sincere, simple, single-hearted, — often to the neglect of "those soft parts of speech," which serve

to give smoothness to the common intercourse of life; or to conceal the intrinsic harshness of contradiction or rebuke, under the forms of sweetest courtesy. Yet he *was* courteous in the best and highest sense of the word. However plain and uncompromising he might be in the utterance of truths, not always agreeable to those who heard them, he had great magnanimity and much genuine kindliness in his disposition. Accordingly, if his honest freedom of speech at any time wounded a feeling that deserved regard, he was the readiest of all men to heal it by a quick atonement. His stern integrity, and the directness and force of his remarks, which gave great authority and weight to his character, did not exclude the gentler qualities, which conciliate affection. Those who knew him best loved him as well as revered him.

"In the minds of all who enjoyed his acquaintance, there is evidence enough that his heart was the home of many of the kindest dispositions and tenderest feelings of our nature. His conversation was very often enlivened with innocent hilarity and playful cheerfulness; and few men have made their intercourse sought on these accounts more than he."*

He was a man of God, fervent, reverential and devout. His piety was not fitful and passionate, but the settled habit of his soul, imparting a savor of holiness to his life. He was indeed a good and great man, earnest, courageous, and high-principled. The elevation of his character and the unconquerable force of his will, gave him in all councils and conventions of clergymen, an authority which few ventured to resist. Everywhere he exercised among men that kind of sovereignty which

* Rev. Mr. Francis's Obituary Notice.

belongs, by divine right, to strong and great souls. As a theologian and as a preacher Dr. Osgood is placed by common consent in the highest rank. A large part of my hearers will need no description of his characteristics; for he was not a man to be forgotten by those who had enjoyed his ministration, even in their childhood. I never saw him but once. It was on an occasion deeply interesting to him, when he assisted at the ordination of a young minister, one of his own church, for whom he felt an almost paternal regard. More than twenty years have since passed away; but the earnest looks and thrilling tones of emotion, with which the venerable and eloquent old man uttered that solemn charge can never pass away from my memory. There was a current of strong and impassioned thought which bore his hearers along with him. His manner was unlike any other, and altogether indiscribable; it seemed to spring directly from his feelings, unshackled by any rules or precedents in oratory. His mind, originally vigorous, was enriched and adorned by a generous culture in the best classic learning. He was a scholar, "a good and ripe one;" for he devoted a long life to the acquisition of knowledge, which he knew how to employ in public discourse with singular power. In preaching, his method was natural and his conceptions clear; and his vivid imagination enabled him often to set forth his subject with great felicity and beauty of illustration. His professional studies were pursued diligently to the end of his life; and few men were so familiar with the Scriptures of the Old and New-Testament in their original languages. He never went into the pulpit without carrying with him the mature results of his best studies and thoughts. And yet perhaps the

power of his preaching was the power of a great character more than that of a great intellect.

He excelled in clear statements of moral truth and in strong appeals to the conscience. In his faithful rebukes and solemn warnings he is said to have been "truly awful." Yet in that strong and brave heart were deep fountains of sensibility. When he spoke of the Father's infinite mercy, the Savior's love, and the invitations of the Gospel to guilty and lost men, it seemed as if his whole being were melting in unutterable tenderness and pity. With a spirit so free, energetic, full of emotion and fire, and richly furnished with the best learning, he could not be other than a powerful preacher. He had not the fear of man before his eyes; he dared always to be true to his own convictions, and faithful to the souls of his people.

Still more interesting to us is his large and liberal soul, utterly incapable of a narrow sectarianism. He respected the rights of every mind and conscience in their fullest extent. The freedom of thought, which he claimed for himself, he granted to others. He suffered no expression of bigotry or intolerance to pass unrebuked in his presence; for he was as bold and downright in word and deed, as he was honest and true in heart. He was what is commonly called Orthodox in his opinions, yet no man in the community did so much, or could do so much as he, to restrain that spirit of exclusiveness, which in the latter part of his life began to create unhappy dissensions in the churches. He would never admit that any man should be denied the Christian name and fellowship on account of his sincere convictions, however widely these convictions might differ from his own. He would keep the unity of the spirit only by the bond of peace — of mutual

charity — of brotherly kindness. Hence his public life was a ministration of power and love, of truth and charity, in rare and beautiful union. The strongest sympathies of his heart, and the most intimate of his ministerial relations were with the most liberal of his clerical brethren. And to the younger among them, who revered him as a father, he was ever ready to afford aid and counsel from his stores of rich experience and solid wisdom. The following declaration of his Catholic sentiments is found in one of his sermons published a few years before his death. "Each of us ought to think and judge for himself, using the reason which God has given us, in searching and studying His revealed will. — From this unrestricted freedom variety of opinion may always be expected to follow. Principles may be adopted by some, which, in the judgment of others, seem to sully the glory of the Gospel. Under the influence of other principles, however, held in common by both parties, their hearts and lives may be conformed to the precepts of Christ. In this case, *there can be no excusable pretence for either party's excluding the other from Christian or ministerial fellowship.* It is certain, that the spirit of Christ is not confined to any one sect, party or denomination of his followers. — "By their fruits shall ye know them, not by their doctrines, nor by their professions."*

"It is not easy," — says one who was able to appreciate the great qualities of his mind and heart, — "to estimate the good influences exerted on the community by a powerful mind thus employed. We believe Dr. Osgood did much to stay the progress of an uncharitable and exclusive spirit, to strengthen a sense of the value of our religious privileges, and of the respect

* Sermon preached at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Francis, Watertown.

we owe each other as disciples of Jesus. He had a weight of character which made his influence felt in a remarkable degree in society." — With regard to the direct effects of his ministry, he had the satisfaction which must belong to a good and faithful servant of Christ. But he set up no fallacious standard of ministerial success; nor did he count any man a useless laborer in the vineyard, merely because he had not been able to stir up a spiritual commotion among his people, nor to raise that feverish excitement, which too often ends in spiritual pride, and consumes the true foundation of the Christian character. No man was more in earnest than he in the cause of religion; no man loved better to witness its progress, "pure and undefiled;" — he saw with joy every indication of the power of the Gospel among his people; his delight was to win souls to Christ. But he wished for no wild and violent efforts at religion; he sought not to produce agonies and raptures, but to place the hearts of his hearers under the tuition of the spirit of the Gospel, and to impress upon them that a good life is the best orthodoxy, and a bad one the worst heresy. He dwelt upon the consideration that a good minister at least prevents much evil; and therefore that he should not be wholly discouraged, though in looking around he should see but few palpable and direct effects of his exertions."*

The usefulness of Dr. Osgood continued, and the power and fervor of his preaching is said to have increased to the end of his long life. His last public services were on the day of the annual Thanksgiving, only a week before his death. He died the 12th day of December, 1822, in the 76th year of his age, and

* Obituary notice of Dr. Osgood, Christian Disciple, November and December. 1822, attributed to the Rev. Converse Francis.

the 49th of his peaceful and happy ministry. He was succeeded by the Rev. Andrew Bigelow, who was born in Groton, but had, from his childhood, been a member of this society. Mr. Bigelow had been before ordained as an Evangelist, and had labored with ability and success in the ministry at Gloucester in this State and at Eastport in Maine. He was installed as minister of this society on the 9th of July, 1823. In about three years he resigned his charge; and is now Pastor of the first Congregational Church in Taunton. The time for speaking of his character is, I hope, far distant. Yet my regard to his feelings need not prevent my bearing testimony, to the deep regret of his people, that any circumstances should, in his opinion, have made a separation from them desirable. He left behind him many aching hearts, and many warm friends, who will not forget how he labored among them as "a good minister of Jesus Christ," in all faithfulness and love. The present Pastor was ordained as his successor on the 28th of February, 1827.

As long as Dr. Osgood lived the whole town of Medford was one parish, upon which the sectarianism of the times had made no distinct and manifest impression. It was its happiness never to have had an illiberal minister. The true spirit of protestantism seems to have presided over the dispensation of the word; and the free action of mind in search of truth had never been impeded by ecclesiastical or clerical domination. This freedom of soul, encouraged by a Catholic and beneficent ministration of the Gospel for more than a century, had gradually mellowed and softened down the harsher features of the ancient New-England theology, until a large majority of the Society had become decidedly liberal in their sentiments. This movement

towards purer and higher forms of spiritual truth, had been long observed by Dr. Osgood; but he had too much sympathy with the independence and progress of the soul, to feel any anxiety about the results of its free action, or throw any hindrance in its way. It could not be expected, however, that all would be equally satisfied; for where there is freedom of mind there will ever be diversity of opinion, — some having a natural affinity for religious views, which, to others, are altogether distasteful, and seem to have no foundation either in reason or in the revelations of God. It is not necessary to go into a detail of events so recent as the formation of two new societies, the one Calvinistic and the other Universalist, within the last sixteen years. A similar story may be told of almost every town in the Commonwealth. The elements of disunion, which had been long fermenting in the bosom of the community, at length broke forth, intimating that the time of division had come. For where the minority of a people, from irreconcilable differences of opinion, cannot worship with the rest with edification and comfort, they had better withdraw and provide for themselves a separate ministration which will satisfy their spiritual wants. I am not disposed to regard the dismemberment of our ancient parish as a calamity; for since the exasperation of sectarian feeling, usually occasioned by such events, has had time to subside, our community is at peace. The troubled waters of life have become clear again. Instead of one, we have three well filled churches, and three societies,— each, as we may hope, doing some humble part in the great work of humanity.

After the formation of a second society, the two streams of civil and ecclesiastical history, which had

long flowed on together, are forced into separate channels. I traced, as well as I could, in its scanty and meagre records, the course of the town, until it became a parish. I now leave it at the point where it loses it ecclesiastical character and ceases to be a parish. It may be well, however, to notice the several houses in which this Society has, in times passed, successively worshipped. The first was built in 1695 and 6,— a very humble edifice, thirty feet long and twenty-seven wide. It stood upon a rock beyond the brook, which runs through the valley a little to the west of the place where we are now assembled. "A committee was appointed by the town to seat the people in the new meeting-house," giving them precedence, partly according to the taxes they paid, and partly on some mysterious principle of social rank, not now understood among us. At first no pews were built; the men were placed on one side of the house and the women the other, after the present fashion of the Shaker Societies. The origin of pews seems to have been as follows. In January, 1701, on a petition of Major Nathaniel Wade, the town voted, that he have leave to build a pew for himself and his family in the meeting-house." Similar grants were soon after voted to persons of consequence; pews became fashionable; and at length nearly the whole house was occupied in this manner. The old system of seating the people was given up, and the pews became private property, either by grant or purchase. This house was soon found to be too small for convenience, and accordingly, in 1727, a little more than thirty years, a new edifice was built, and opened for public worship. It was considerably larger than the first, being fifty-two feet long and thirty-eight wide. It stood by the side of what was called Marrabell's brook, a

short distance to the eastward of the former house. In the year 1769, forty-two years afterwards, the town erected the edifice in which we are now assembled for the last time, before it is taken down, that a more commodious and tasteful structure may be reared on its site.

And now, my friends, we are to bid farewell forever to this temple of God, which, though time-worn and unsightly in its appearance, is dear and venerable to many of us for its holy remembrances. Not with unmingled pain, however, do we leave it, for we hope in a few months to see a more beautiful house of our God spring up on the same consecrated ground where we and our fathers have worshipped. The inspiring associations of the old temple we will carefully cherish and transfer to the new. Soon will the golden candlestick reappear in its wonted place, and we shall rejoice together in its light.

There are two aspects in which we may consider the building of which we are taking a final leave. We may look upon the old and decaying house as a sign of weakness and decrepitude, of the decline of the institutions and spirit of religion. The sentiment of religion is the tree of Life, mentioned in the Apocalypse, "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." The "leaves" are institutions, houses of worship, all outward means and instruments of grace. They are not perennial; they all have in them the principle of decay. They "fall into the sear and yellow leaf of autumn;" they wither, moulder away, and mingle with dust from which they sprung. But the vitality of the tree is not impaired. It survives the severest winter of calamity and persecution; and ever does it clothe itself anew with the freshness and beauty

of genial youth. So our hope in human establishments,— the mere clothing of the religious idea,— rests not upon their permanence, but upon their perpetual regeneration. The institutions and forms of one age may be ill adapted to the spirit and wants of another; then let them be reconstructed. The vast and solemn cathedral and the lowly meeting-house sooner or later will fall into decay; then let them be rebuilt. Let the "Tree of Life," have its roots in the depths of our spiritual being; let its branches stretch up towards Heaven, ever renewing its "leaves for the healing of the nations," and bearing fruits of righteousness to nourish and bless the souls of men.

There is a deep and holy sentiment connected with an ancient house of worship. We cannot give it up wlthout a pang. But the feeling may be indulged too far. We may fondly cling to our falling house till we are crushed and buried under its ruins. A Christian society may reject the outward means of its renovation, from a blind attachment to what is old, till its strength and life are gone, and nothing old is left to them worth preserving. The reverence which binds us to an ancient place of worship, had it been too tenaciously cherished, would have prevented the building of the edifice in which we are now assembled; and we must have been at this day a feeble few, crowding into the little and ruined meeting-house which our ancestors erected in the time of their sore trials and straits.

And now, my friends, however painfully we may go from this house, let us go cheerfully and hopefully. We go to return again. This visible pile is to disappear in a few days, but the temple of God is not to be removed out of its place; here on this consecrated ground it is again to stand restored,— a symbol of the

resurrection. With profound sensibility we go away, to come again and find a new temple, round which holiest affections may gather and kindle. And when the edifice, which is to rise on the ruins of this, shall in its turn grow old, and become unfit to satisfy the wants and tastes of some distant future, let that too fall, only to re-appear in a better resurrection. Thus may the frail house, built by human hands, become immortal like the spirit that hallows it. The ground it stands on is holy; we would never have it desecrated by meaner uses. The wood and stones thereof grow old and are changed, but let the temple forever be one, — the centre of the same inspiring associations, — a symbol of the presence of Him, who is One, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

There is another aspect, however, in which it may be regarded; not as an old thing to be removed, but as a holy thing to be venerated. The idea of a house of worship connects itself in our minds with the great purposes to which it has been devoted, the blessings and consolations of religion, the life and power of faith, and the eternal hope of souls. There is a sanctity in every structure, however humble and time shattered, that has been consecrated to communion with God, and to the regeneration of man. If a divine word or inspired thought has ever touched and quickened our souls in the sanctuary, it rushes upon us again at this parting hour. Here we have sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his gracious words of wisdom and love, his lessons of justice, faithfulness, and charity, his revelations of hope and blessedness. Here most of you have listened to the reverend old man, "like an ambassador of Christ, beseeching you to be reconciled to God." You have seen his deep emotion, when,

> "By him the violated law spoke out
> Its thunders, and by him in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the Gospel whispered peace."

And dear to your souls is the memory of these privileges, holy is the place where they have been enjoyed; it cannot seem old, but venerable,— the more venerable because your mind goes not back to its origin. You have never seen upon it the working of human hands; you have heard no sound of hammer or saw; to your imagination it is without beginning, and you would have it without end. I cannot but sympathize with the sentiment, though my own relation to this ancient structure is but of yesterday. It is honorable to human nature. I would that every Christian Temple could be built from the everlasting Rock, that it might be imperishable as the spiritual idea of which it is the visible sign. I would not abandon this frail edifice with heartless indifference. Let all its accumulated remembrances go with us. Let us linger, and look, and sigh out a last farewell. House of God farewell,—forever! From every part of thy old frame come melodies and counsels and warnings. The bell has tolled its final summons; in a few moments the organ notes will be hushed to their long silence; the clock, from its high watchtower, has just sounded out in our ears, its last solemn tone, as if time should be no more; the spire points upward to the serene Heavens, to shew us that our home and rest are there, in the bosom of the Infinite. The pulpit,—the altar of baptism,—the table of Christ, with its touching memories—all, with inarticulate, but thrilling voices, echo our last farewell! With mingled emotions of sorrow and gladness we go; we obey the voice of God, speaking to us through his Providence, and saying, "arise and depart for this is not your rest."

PUBLIC WORSHIP;

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

OF

THE NEW CHURCH,

ERECTED BY

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN MEDFORD,

ON

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4th, 1839.

DISCOURSE II.

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH.

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1 Corinthians iii, 16.

Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?

The soul that makes an offering is greater than the gift. No sacrifice is so noble as the spirit that hallows it. No house built by human hands for the service of God, is so holy as that which He hath chosen and sanctified for Himself in every pure heart. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

The building of a house of worship, however, is an act of deep spiritual significance. It is a sacrifice of the visible to the invisible, of the temporal to the eternal. There is a language of signs more impressive than any articulate speech. The house of God is an expression of the public faith and religious sentiment. It stands apart, a consecrated thing, among the busy throngs of men, and from its calm and holy retirement, ever come voices of counsel, rebuke and warning, as from the oracle of God. It intimates our connexion with a higher life, and directs our thoughts to nobler uses of our being, than we have yet acknowledged. A

new Temple, rising from the foundation of the old, may be regarded as a sign of the regeneration of the society to which it belongs. If it does not kindle up in our languishing souls a warmer and fresher interest in the ordinances of the Gospel, and breathe into them anew the breath of Divine life, it wholly fails to accomplish its greatest object. If it has any significance or value beyond our ordinary dwellings, it is derived from the act of faith which consecrates it; and by ever new and freewill offerings of faith, must it be kept holy. Henceforth this edifice is sacred to the interests and aspirations of the soul. It rejects all meaner uses. Every unchristian feeling or unworthy thought desecrates it. The visible beauty may remain, but no longer is it an expression of spiritual beauty in the invisible life of the worshipper. You cannot appropriate it to any secular object without destroying the sublimity of its idea, and the integrity of its impression. To come into it for the furtherance of worldly ends, or with minds occupied with selfish schemings, is to set up the tables of the money changers and stalls for the sale of oxen in the courts of God. The place is profaned by every thing that defiles the soul which enters it. No sanctuary can be holier than the hearts of its worshippers.

Let every thought then of this visible temple be accompanied with deeper thoughts of the invisible adorning of the soul with piety and faith and love. Let it shadow forth the rekindling of devout sentiments and all Christian graces in the heart of this people. If we allow ourselves to be satisfied by its outward ministration to our senses and tastes, it is no temple of God that we have reared, but an unhallowed monument of our pride and vanity, upon which no blessing descends. When we removed our ancient house of worship as no

longer worthy of its sacred service, and caused this new edifice to rise, in its serene beauty on the same consecrated ground, we were virtually pledged to build up the spiritual temple of God with a diviner beauty. The act implied a self-surrender; it signified that we here dedicate our whole being to God, with the inspiration of high and holy aims, and with the strength and earnestness of an unconquerable resolution. We would not exhaust our energies in rebuilding and adorning the outward while we leave the sanctuary within a mournful ruin. This new edifice speaks to us of a reviving sentiment of religion in the hearts of the people. Let us endeavor to fulfil the augury. Let it stand here ever more a holy and free offering of our souls to God and to the best interest and hope of humanity, undefiled by meaner motive or aim. May it be a ministration of love and grace, of peace and charity, and truth and holiness to the present and all coming generations. Ever may it be hallowed anew by the thronging in of devout worshippers, yearning for the communications of infinite wisdom and love.

We are here to-day to yield it up by acts of faith and devotion to Him, for whom we have built it. But by these religious ceremonies, — these prayers and spiritual songs and solemn organ notes, we do not hope to impart to it any mysterious sanctity, which it would not else possess; we aim only to express our sense of the great purposes, for which it has been erected, and our reverence for the living God to whose public worship it is devoted. This public worship is the subject to which your attention is now invited.

It may be regarded, in the first place, as a ministration to the best interest of civil society. By educating the will, the conscience, and the moral sentiments of a

whole people, it gives to human laws their highest sanction, and to social justice and order their best security. The value of religious institutions is underrated by those who have never known the want of them. They are a great conservative force, valuable at least for the evil they prevent. So much of their influence is expended in checking the downward tendencies of society, that we are not always able to trace it in any positive and strongly marked effects.

I was once in a condition to observe the habits and morals of a community, that had been several years without the ministry of the Gospel; and I hope never again to see so melancholy a spectacle of degeneracy. The coarsest vices corrupted the innocence and polluted the decencies of a rural life. It was difficult to find an example of moral purity. Youth even had grown old in sin, children were taking early lessons in profligacy, and fast ripening into unprincipled men, and lawless members of society. Every where a spirit of irreverence and profane mockery prevailed.

Wherever religious institutions have fallen into decay, we find society declining towards barbarism, — losing the virtues but retaining all the worst vices of civilized life. Its condition is more wretched and hopeless than that of a pagan state; for paganism, even in its lowest forms, still reveres and worships something. But here is no faith, nor worship, nor any reverence, — not even that superstitious dread of invisible powers, which in the utter absence of moral sentiment and principle, does sometimes keep in check the excesses of human passion. Let it not be thought that I would overlook or undervalue the inborn forces of man; God has always a witness for himself in the moral nature. The soul sits throned in its own sphere of activity and

power, able to rise, in the Divinity of its strength, and subdue and triumph over all untoward circumstances, nay, make them instruments of its own growth and elevation. And it never abdicates its sovereignty. The moral faculties are universal. But they are not universally awake and active. Too often they seem not to be the true guides of life, so much as blind instincts, tendencies, yearnings, which clearly intimate our need of light and instruction from a higher source. The revelation of God is a natural want of man.

In the worst state of society you may find here and there a religious family, and there you may see beautiful flowers and fruits of faith springing up and growing under home culture, and changing the veriest desert of life into a garden of God. For He is present every where, — in the wild forest with the back-woodsman, or in the farm-house on the boundless prairie of the West, as well as in the thronged city with its hundred church spires pointing up to the Heavens — and every where the true worshipper finds His temple and His law in his own soul. But few will there be to worship the Father or reverence His just authority, where there are no visible signs of His presence, and no voice from the sanctuary speaks to man of his social duties or spiritual wants.

The institution of social worship is the embodiment of the public idea of God and His Providence; and it is a fixed and permanent centre, from which moral influences radiate in every direction. It forms the citizen as well as the Christian. It has a power to wake up in the soul a sentiment of its true good, and give it objects of thought and interest, which lie beyond and above the world of sense. In every Christian temple, stands the Pulpit, representing the ministry of Christ,

the Divine Teacher. How grievously this ministry, in the hands of men, has fallen short of its great aims; how unworthy it has been and is, of its sublime objects, I need not say. Whatever may be the organ of its utterance, still the pulpit is the visible sign of a communication of God with human souls. Here is the Gospel of reconciliation, peace, hope; here is the representative of divine truth, light and wisdom and mercy. You come up here from the fiery trials and temptations of the business world; from scenes of pleasure or pain; from the conflicts and vexations of many-colored life; from glad homes or sorrowful homes; from the sufferings of want and the dangers of wealth: and here you may find a power to bear and a power to resist. Miserably formal and heartless must be the ministration of the pulpit, if it has not a word of life for every soul that feels its weakness and wants. Its inspiration is the spirit of the living God; its field of action is the unfathomable heart of man. All human conditions and experiences furnish its themes. Life, and its ever changing aspects, its stern discipline, its pleasures, trials and sins, are its inexhaustible resources. Is the heart of man so dead that he cannot hear the voice of God in His sanctuary? Is the Divinity hid from him, behind the symbols of His presence? Whether in the market-place or in the temple, shall he live always in the same element of worldly interest or passionate strife? It cannot be. The moral power of the pulplt *is* felt; and I believe it is destined to be more and more developed, as it obtains a better insight into the elements and laws of the soul.

But it is not my purpose to speak of the instructions and warnings of the pulpit, — important as they may be, — but of the silent, mysterious influence of the house

of worship. Most of us have known what it is to feel a certain refreshment and elevation of spirit, in coming out of the mean tumults of the world, and the hot and stifling atmosphere of sin, into a serener region of spiritual purity and peace, where all selfish and rude passions are hushed to repose. We have advanced in our religious experience. We feel that God is there; for there our souls are tranquil enough to hear his still small voice. And we go away with a deeper veneration for His character and authority. He is present to our consciousness in shape of a command, a principle or a moral sentiment. The sense of His overshadowing presence will give nobleness to our aims, and sanctity to our every-day employments; and so idealise our life, that all its hard and dusty labors will become religious duties, instead of an unblessed sacrifice to the god of this world. The soul, thus filled with the sentiment of God, everywhere finds the aliment by which it lives and grows. Society, nature, books, human life, with its ever-changing aspects, are rich in lessons of truth and wisdom. Under this beneficent discipline, man becomes temperate, faithful and humane; a lover of order and justice. A profound sense of his relation to God makes him dutiful and beneficent towards all the children of God.

II. But again, the institution of public worship has a higher office than that of preserving the decency and order of society. It cherishes a healthy and devout inward life.

The efficacy of our religion resides not in external forms and ceremonies, but in its unseen spiritual energy. It lies deep in the unfathomable soul. Its power and life depend upon the profoundest sentiments and affections of our nature. Nevertheless, those outward

influences, which open our hearts to impressions of invisible reality, naturally dispose us to meditate seriously upon the great objects of faith. A house of worship, standing in its calm and holy seclusion, in the midst of our homes and places of business, and scenes of joy and grief and temptation, speaks to us continually of the ideal and infinite; of God to whom it is so nearly related.

God, indeed, needeth not a house made by men's hands. The whole universe is His temple, filled and rejoicing with His presence. But men do need such edifices to touch their imagination and their sensibility. Venerable to the soul is the house consecrated to the expression of devout sentiment. If you would feel the whole power of the "genius of the place," go into it alone, on a day when there is no gathering of the congregation; and if you have never had a religious emotion before, you will feel it now. There is a savor of Holiness and Divinity in the place. Its silence overawes you; its sublime associations subdue your soul to reverence as you walk along the solemn aisles. How different are these emotions from any thing you feel when you enter a common lecture room or hall of justice. Such feelings as these we should carefully cherish, not at the time of our Sabbath worship only, but all our days; and wherever we go, let them go with us to guard the sanctity of our souls from the vanity and earthliness that would desecrate it.

We should not think lightly of a holy ministration to any faculty of our nature. Imagination, taste, the sentiment of beauty, all have their offices in our spiritual culture. Why should not piety avail itself of the law of association, which can be turned to account for every meaner purpose? If great men and great deeds

of other times may perpetuate their influence by festal days and monumental structures associated with their memory, why should not religion also have its sacred places, where reverence may adore, and gratitude kindle, and devotion bring its holiest offerings, — where Christ dwells in the emblems of his death-sacrifice, and God in the altar of His worship, — where the wounded soul may give utterance to the sorrows of repentance, or seek Divine relief in its heart-breaking agony? Religion has a voice and a power in every house of God, where the teachings of His wisdom and the messages of His love have often waked our profoundest sensibilities. It needs no deep insight into the laws of the soul to know that vital piety derives much of its power and blessedness from its hold on the imagination. It will not do to strip it of all those significant symbols, which are the clothing of the religious idea, and leave it naked and shivering in the cold domain of intellect. Religion belongs to the heart. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The faculty of understanding is adequate to form the theologian, but to form the Christian it is not adequate. A higher wisdom than can be comprehended in logic forms is imparted through direct impressions upon the soul. There must be institutions and ordinances to nourish the *sentiment* of piety, and keep alive the genial warmth of the heart. The house of worship is a conspicuous and venerable memorial of God, — a Book of Divine Revelations, — lifted up on high, that "he who runs may read," though he is disposed to read nothing else. It is a point round which the religious associations of every little community of believers cluster and grow, and a power goes forth from it to "touch to healthful issues" the deepest springs of life.

III. And again, I would speak, in this connexion, of the worship of the sanctuary as the sign of public reverence.

This is the seminal principle of all true piety, without which the sense of duty is a bondage, and the fear of God an abject superstition, — utterly incapable of generous enthusiasm, or of a cheerful and filial worship. Reverence belongs to pure and noble souls; it is the result of that higher religious experience which changes a mean, slavish passion into one of the sublimest of human emotions. It is the humility by which man is exalted. To revere God is to appreciate and love goodness in its last perfection. It implies some worthy conceptions of a Spiritual Being mightier than ourselves, to whom we are attracted by a holy and mysterious sympathy. Man becomes "One with God" when he enters into spiritual union with Him, and is able to recognise His presence in his own consciousness. Then he has a true veneration for His law, His character and His authority.

The house of public worship is a visible expression of this sentiment, and it also re-acts upon it and keeps it alive in the heart of society. It constantly reminds the young of the near presence of the Infinite Father, to whom they see the good and the wise everywhere doing grateful homage. The spirit of reverence communicates itself by natural sympathy from heart to heart. They feel its power in the sanctuary, and thenceforth the place is holy, — "none other than the house of God, — the Gate of Heaven." It goes with them into their working day employments, and sheds over them all the beauty of holiness. This coarse and ill-favored life is transfigured with a Divine glory. "Old things have passed away, behold all things become new." They ascend to a higher point of vision,

and lo, a new Heaven and a new Earth." The visible creation is all radiant with God's presence; the serene skies, the growing of plants, the beauty and fragrance of flowers, the murmur of water-courses, the many voiced music of birds, all have a deep significance for the spiritual worshipper. All goodly sights and melodious sounds reveal the present Father. The Divinity breathes over him in the cool summer wind, descends in refreshing showers, shines down upon him in the bright, warm sun. The universe is full of holy mystery, and in the midst of its grandeur and beauty, under the shadow of God, he walks with reverent lowliness; and the spirit of mockery and unbelief, of contempt and hate, finds no place in his bosom. "He dwelleth in God," and therefore "dwelleth in love," for "God is Love."

The homage which the soul pays to goodness is its greatest action. It raises man into communion and sympathy with what he reveres, and he becomes partaker of its nature. By humbling himself before the Highest, he is exalted. The attributes he adores, he appropriates. He seeks instruction from above. He listens reverently to the Divine will, which everywhere finds utterance in manifold voices of wisdom and truth. By his deep veneration of the holy and the perfect he is new-created in the Divine Image. He respects the nature which God gave him too highly to debase it by meanness or sensuality. He would keep the great trust unblemished, that he may render it back in faultless beauty. He has entered into spiritual union with God, and become godlike in virtue; above all things he loves and honors truth, benevolence, justice, and strong-hearted principle. This reverent spirit gives sanctity and elevation to a community, where God is honored in the sacred symbols of His worship.

A wise people will nourish this sentiment in the heart of society, by all those institutions and significant acts which are adapted to give it fit expression. In every town and city, so far as its means will justify, let the resources of wealth and taste be drawn forth to embody in forms of visible beauty, the true idea of worship. Let the temple rise ever, in the midst of our dwellings and scenes of labor, bearing impressive testimony, that God is here, reigning in the hearts and lives of a faithful people. And let the spire reach upward as if it would lose itself in the silent Heavens. The lofty steeple and solemn tower, unknown to classical antiquity, represent a great idea of our religion. They intimate the aspirations of the soul after the infinite; they are signs of its relation to absolute and Eternal Being.—They are not the mere outward decoration of a church, but an expressive language to those who can ascend by faith to the height of the spiritual fact they represent, leading their minds up to the region of illimitable thought, activity and progress in the bosom of Infinite Goodness and Love. They are the ladder in the vision of the patriarch of elder time, on which the Angels of the Divine Presence are ascending and descending. I can easily believe what is told us of the awe and veneration excited by the grandeur of ecclesiastical architecture in the old world. The vast Cathedrals, the paintings, the statues, the strains of sublime music which appeal so touchingly to the imagination and affections, seem to have had their origin in a profound insight into the wants and laws of the soul. We cannot transplant this exotic magnificence into the soil of New-England; we would not if we could. For notwithstanding its power of inspiring devout and reverential emotions, it would do violence to our habits of

thought and feeling. It seems to us to be too wide a departure from the simplicity of Christ. May it not, however, serve as a striking illustration of the aid, which art may give to the impressions of truth, by speaking through the senses to the soul? If we do not aim at splendor, we ought not to be satisfied with meanness or deformity in our sacred edifices. Beneficent and far-sighted is the liberality, that imparts grandeur or beauty to a public building, the very aspect of which may affect the character of coming generations. This sacrifice of faith to the best interest of humanity, is the "casting of bread upon the waters," trusting that it "will return after many days." And the trusting spirit is not disappointed. Never has a generous outlay for the gratification of taste, or of a higher sentiment, a better apology or a richer recompense. Every noble or graceful monument of art, embodying at once the idea of religion and the soul of genius, is an important and permanent aid in the spiritual cultivation of a people. From the bosom of restless and passionate life, the Temple of God, daily and hourly preaches forth its Everlasting Gospel, kindling the heart and the imagination. Its solemn stillness, amidst the multitudinous sounds of business, is eloquent. All the mightiest agencies in the Universe are mute, voiceless. Yet they remind man, in language more impressive than articulate speech, of his spiritual relations, which are adapted to fill his soul with humble and holy reverence.

"The Heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth the work of His hands.
Day uttereth instruction to day,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
They have no speech, nor language,
And their voice is not heard.
Yet their sound goeth forth to all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world."

IV. Again, the institution of public worship cherishes the sentiment of human brotherhood.

We cannot have a true and loyal veneration for the Father without respecting the children whom He has created in His image; He has made us of one blood; we are all brethren. In the Sanctuary of His Presence our self-exaggeration is rebuked. However different our conditions may be in the world, we all stand on the same level before the Infinite, as frail, imperfect creatures; and we cannot but feel a deep sympathy with each other. In the Catholic churches of the West Indies, the master and slave are found kneeling side by side on the pavement. The instinct of religion overleaps earthly distinctions. Our souls kindle and glow with generous love as they pour themselves out in the united prayer that swells up from the beating heart of the great congregation. We come up here as disciples of one Master, children of one Father, looking for the same Eternal home and hope of all souls.

The conditions of human life limit our intimacies to a narrow circle. We are occupied for the most part with our private affairs. Every one is "seeking his own," honestly it may be, in the fair and honorable competition of trade; — but from the very nature of most worldly enterprises, somewhat selfishly. To live is found to be a serious business, — so serious that the means of living are more regarded than the end. Men of thrift are anxious; they must make the most of time and opportunity, they are in a hurry; they wish well to their neighbor, but they cannot stop to consider his well-being. And often their self-love is an overmatch for their benevolent and social feelings. Unless it is kept in strict subordination to the nobler sentiments,

care, anxiety and the desire of gain will destroy or greatly narrow down their kindly sympathies. To love their neighbor as themselves is found to be the most difficult of duties; brotherly kindness and charity have no definite meaning. Such is the tendency of the modern system of society to separate men widely from each others' sympathy and regard — a tendency which, undoubtedly may be, and often is successfully resisted; for the soul of a true man is superior to all circumstances.

There is a tendency, moreover, in the artificial distinctions of society, in fashion, in wealth and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, to destroy the feeling of the brotherhood of man. Nowhere perhaps has this tendency been more strongly developed than in our own country and time. We reject all claims to consideration founded on hereditary rank, but the way is open for every kind of ambitious pretension to put itself forward not less offensively. Besides, the too eager pursuit of wealth, and the conflicts and scrambles of political parties, keep society in a state of hot fermentation, and bring into activity all the meanest and most dissocial passions. There is danger that a man's best social feelings will languish for want of exercise, when he comes every day into contact with so much that he is inclined to hate or fear.

Christianity places us in another and higher point of view. It contemplates man as a soul in his undying nature and spiritual relations. It sees nothing high and nothing low save what rises out of our own character. The only greatness it acknowledges is greatness of soul. Every good man is great in the kingdom of Heaven — great only through his virtues, sacrifices and disinterested services to his kind. We are all of one

family, of one rank. "He that is greatest among us is the servant of all." This is the lesson of the meek and lowly Jesus, and it is perpetually repeated through the institutions which visibly embody his idea.

But whatever we may look to as an ideal of society; we can never hope to see actual equality in the world. The constitution of nature and of man forbid it. The relation of inferior and superior is natural and intrinsic. Men are made for different labors and functions, and accordingly with different endowments. They can no more be equal in wisdom and greatness, than in strength and stature. Besides, by the law of our being we strive against such equality; we endeavor to raise ourselves above the common level of humanity; we would banish, if possible, our sense of inherent littleness by obtaining a great position. After all, our outward condition must be unequal, as it is commonly the result of different habits, activities and powers. The problem then is, how to banish the evils of *inequality* and make the best of that which no human arrangements can ever do away? How shall we prevent pride and scorn, envy and hatred, from springing up to embitter social life and set man against man, and class against class, in mean jealousy or angry contention? No power can do this but the power of love.

When we habitually unite in the exercises of a religion, whose central principle is universal love, these jarring dissonances will cease; and we shall hear angel voices proclaiming "peace on earth and good will among men." The spirit of Christ subdues all discordant passions, and under his gentle dominion, there is the divine harmony of pure souls. We may cherish his spirit of justice and humanity by coming often together, as his disciples, and bowing humbly before his

Father and ours in His Temple where all earthly vanities and distinctions sink into nothing in view of Infinite realities. Here we shall learn to see ourselves as God sees us; and the false, the artificial, and the conventional will be stripped of their vain pretensions, and appear as poor and trivial as they really are. We are told that when the ancient Christian emperors of Rome were about to enter a church, they laid aside the pomp and splendor of royalty, dismissed their guards and stood, as little children, before the Infinite Ruler, on a level with His lowliest worshippers.

This abdication of earthly grandeur before God is the recognition of a great truth; we are all equal in his sight; we stand in this sacred place alike frail, erring creatures; all pretension seems impious. This house belongs to the Father of all, who sees nothing great on earth, but what He owns as such in Heaven, — a great and heroic soul. While we are before Him humbly seeking pardon and life, we obtain a deeper sense of the utter unfitness of pride, contempt, and envy and all uncharitableness, for such beings as we are. We learn to respect and love our fellow-man, as man; and these external circumstances and trappings, which have too often been matters of vain-gloryings and fierce heart-burnings, are divested of all their factitious importance. We are willing that another should rise above us by the intrinsic force of his natural superiority; and we feel no contempt for the inferior. Nor can we hate or scorn a wandering, guilty brother; all human conditions, all human experiences, are interesting to us. Whatever concerns the well-being of a man is our concern; if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. We feel that we are bound up, for weal or woe, with the destinies and hopes of humanity. We

would not separate ourselves from the great family. We learn to be helpful to one another. Our hearts yearn towards every human being because we see in him a brother — a child of God, created with capacities for great thought, great action and illimitable progress. And even in the lowest debasement to which sensuality and vice may have reduced him, he is still a man, bearing about him some portion of the Father's image though sullied and dishonored. Such fallen creatures Jesus came to redeem. He wept for them, prayed for them, died for them; but he never hated, never despised them, — never despaired of them. He saw more hope in the Publican than in the Pharisee. He "preached glad tidings to the poor, proclaimed deliverance to the captive, bound up the broken-hearted, called sinners to repentance." And here, in this house of his Father and ours, we would fill our souls with his divine spirit of love and pity. We would earnestly endeavor to feel the force of two great lessons taught by his pure and perfect life; — the one is, never to hate, — the other, never to scorn any living creature of God. The first is comparatively easy; the second more difficult, but not impossible.

What cruel wrong is often done to humanity by harsh and insulting denunciations! Cannot we bear a little while with those, whom the Father has borne with so long? "Shall mortal man be more just than God, — stricter to mark iniquity, — swifter to punish? Here under the shadow of His sublime presence, we gladly receive the lessons of that divine charity which "suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, hopeth all things." We would look with profound sensibility upon a fallen man, discerning in him something that lies deeper than his folly and sin; for under

these moral ruins are hidden the rudiments of a great soul, — buried, but not dead. We must not hate him nor despise him, — God's workmanship, our brother,— for the man may outlive the sin that has so desecrated a noble nature. Some word of life may yet touch his heart, and save him from "the second death." Melancholy indeed is the ruin of an immortal man; but more venerable still in his fallen grandeur than the ruins of an ancient temple, upon whose defaced and broken columns the traveller gazes with mournful admiration.

V. Finally, the worship of the visible sanctuary is an expressive sign of the worship of an invisible sanctuary holier than itself.

"Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The worship He most delights in is the humble prayer of faith,— the yearning of the devout soul for union with the indwelling Father. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; it is within you; it has no visible throne. Wherever divine truth has touched and sanctified a living heart, there is the seat of His dominion. There He reigns by the everlasting constitution of the soul. And there is His temple, where He listens to the inaudible breathings of inward piety. The most acceptable sacrifice is a religious heart and an upright life, — the sacrifice of passion, pride and self-will to our sense of duty, — the "crucifying of ourselves unto the world and the world unto us." In that living Temple, the deepest emotions of our hearts, in their remorse, or sorrow, or rapt devotion, are uttered in the ear of the Father alone. The sincerest and holiest of all worship is direct. It seeks no earthly channel of communication. The finite spirit mingles in closest

union with the very spirit of God; in the bosom of the Infinite is its home and rest. And not in tones audible to mortal ear do its deepest feelings obtain utterance; the stranger intermeddleth not with them; — they have found no articulate speech. "The spirit makes intercession within with groanings which cannot be uttered."

To such secret communings, that can be trusted to no third mind, are the children of God admitted. We may trust God with secrets of the heart, which may not be trusted to our dearest friend. The pure soul dwells in His sanctuary "a priest after the order of Melchisedeck," ordained to a diviner worship than that of the Hebrew pontiff, when he entered the Holy of Holies with the sacred emblems of office. The individual man does not lose himself in masses and congregations; for himself must he worship. Whether he is in the field, the market-place, the church, or in the closet with the door shut, the purest, freest offering comes ever from the sacred retirement of his soul. He stands as if alone with God in the universe, — not a part, not a fraction of a society, — but a whole, — an indistructible unit, existing for his own sake, and working out of his own being, amidst these shadows of time and the smoke and dust of the finite world, his portion of the Eternal and Infinite Good.

The visible Temple then is the representative of something greater and better than itself. And he who ministers at its altar can be no more than the organ of your worship. He can *be* nothing, he can *do* nothing for you, unless he is one with you in sympathy, giving true expression to wants and emotions which you and he feel in common. Not *for* you, but *with* you, must he strive to give utterance to the inarticulate cry of the soul for relief in its spiritual sorrow or darkness. And

the pulpit, — an important element in the institutions of Christianity, — is but "your helper in the truth." It may give you light and truth and warning, but it cannot do the work of your souls. It cannot bring peace to the unrepentant sinner, nor deliverance to those who love their bondage.

It is not enough that we build and consecrate a house for sacred purposes. Not here alone must we seek the Divinity; in the secrecy of our souls we must find a holier temple, where our worship is in spirit and in truth. This inward worship is more spiritual than any outward act; for it brings us into divine sympathy with the Father. It is the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." "the pure in heart shall see God." He is here; above, around, within you. Him your hearts worship, not as a distant being throned in the far-off Heavens, without love or providential care of his creatures. O no; the irrepressible instincts of the soul cry out for the *Living God.* "Like a lost child, wandering and weeping in unknown tumults," it is alone in the midst of crowds, and longs to find its Father. And it finds Him, ever near, inexpressibly dear, blessing it with the boundlessness of His love.

"Ye are the Temple of God and His spirit dwelleth in you." Only as you contain Him, — the Uncontainable, in your very heart, does He exist for you. You know, you revere, you love so much of Him as you have taken up into your being, and made one with your inward life. Only as you have experience of the harmony of your spirit with the Divine Spirit, is there any true life abiding in you. Without this reverent feeling of His nearness, this devout surrender of your mind and will, heart and life to Him, you have no God in the world, nor true worship. In your public services

there may be the sign but not the thing signified,—"the form of Godliness, but not the life or power thereof." You may build churches and adorn them with all the beauty of ancient and modern art, but there is no divinity to hallow them, unless He finds a holier dwelling there in the souls of His worshippers.

If you walk with Him in faith, feel His presence, love, adore and obey, then do you worship Him in the inmost Holy of Holies, where He ever makes the brighest revelations of his love. There to all holy souls, in the hour of inspired devotion, does "He manifest himself as He does not unto the world." Never is the good man so strong, so great, so free, as when he humbles himself before the Father with filial trust and lowliest self-abasement.

And now to the Father of lights and of mercies,—to his blessed Son and Representative, through whom God was manifest in the flesh to take away the sins of the world,—and to the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and Comforter of souls, we dedicate this house which our hands have builded. We dedicate it to the same feelings and associations that hallow the place, to which you, and your fathers before you, have so long come up to worship. We rejoice to see it risen from the foundations of our time-honored sanctuary, a sign of the "repairing of old wastes in Zion." For it would grieve us sorely to see the ravages of decay upon the walls of God's house. "May the glory of this latter house be greater than the glory of the former." Here may we obtain a deeper sense of the significance, power, and inexpressible worth of sacred institutions and ordinances; may we feel also, that the soul is greater than all its instruments and aids. Here may our public worship become ever dearer and dearer

to us, as it becomes a truer expression of the holier worship in our hearts.

To this sublime homage of all pure souls, which the Father makes His chosen dwelling-place, we solemnly consecrate this house. We consecrate it to the communications of Divine Wisdom and Truth, — to a ministration of justice and order, of grace and love, of charity and mercy and peace. We consecrate it to the highest interests of the great brotherhood of man,— to the redemption of souls from sin by the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ,— to the blessed hope and promise of Immortal Life, and to the pure worship of the One Living God.

> "O Thou who dost prefer
> Before all Temples, the upright heart and pure,"

deign to accept the gift. May Thy presence bless it. May Thy spirit hallow it. May a true religious loyalty bind us ever to thy worship and service. To us and our children and our children's children may the place be holy. Here may we "dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Here may we commune with the Father in the Invisible Temple of our souls, where is the altar of holiest sacrifice, with its sacred fire evermore burning.

ORDER OF SERVICES

AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH,

ERECTED BY THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN MEDFORD,

DECEMBER 4, 1839.

I. Voluntary on the Organ.

II. Anthem.

The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel,
And girded himself with strength;
He hath made the round world so sure
That it cannot be moved —
Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared,
Thou art from everlasting —
The floods are risen, O Lord,
The floods lift up their voice,
The floods lift up their waves —
The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly,
But yet the Lord that dwelleth on high, is mightier —
Holiness becometh thy house forever and ever—
Amen.

III. Introductory Prayer, *By Rev. Nathaniel Hall.*

IV. Selection from the Scriptures, *By Rev. Edward B. Hall.*

V. Original Hymn, *By Rev. Nathaniel Hall.*

This house that we have builded, Lord,
We yield it unto thee;
Come, and thy glorious name record—
Thou, who art purity!

Our ready offering we surround,
And lift our eyes above;
Now, let accepting grace be found—
Thou, who art also, love!

O, ever, here, may waiting hearts
Receive the quick'ning fire;
May all of hope thy word imparts,
Each worshipper inspire.

Here be the world's attractions dim,
Its gold appear but dross,
While kneeling faith contemplates Him
Who hung upon the cross.

Here may His cross its wonders prove;—
The slumbering spirit stir,
The burden and the fear remove,
And bring the Comforter;

Impart a new and conquering strength
To every noble aim;
And make the spirit one, at length,
With Him from whom it came.

And thus, again, to Him supreme,
Long-hallowed spot! thou'rt given;
Thus, while the stars above thee beam,
Be thou the gate of heaven!

VI. Prayer of Dedication, *By Rev. Converse Francis, D. D.*

VII. Hymn.

O, bow thine ear, Eternal One!
On Thee our heart adoring calls;
To Thee the followers of thy Son
Have raised and now devote these walls.

Here may Thine honor dwell; and here,
As incense, let Thy children's prayer,
From contrite hearts and lips sincere,
Rise on the still and holy air.

And when the lips, that with Thy name
Are vocal now, to dust shall turn,
On others may devotion's flame
Be kindled here, and purely burn.

VIII. Sermon, *By Rev. Caleb Stetson.*

IX. Original Hymn, *By Rev. William H. Furness.*

To the High and Holy One—
To His Spirit, to His Son,
To the sacred hope of heaven,
Through our Lord and Savior given,

To the truth that makes us free,
To the Light that leads to Thee,
We this temple dedicate,
And Thy blessing, Lord, await.

Canst Thou be approached by men?
Angels, and archangels, when
God his brightness on them sheds,
Veil thier faces, bow their heads.

Yet, we know, O God, Thou art
Present in the lowly heart;
There will He descend and reign,
Whom the Heavens cannot contain.

In our hearts Thy temple rear;
Let that glory there appear
Which shall cause this place to shine
With a beauty all divine.

X. Concluding Prayer, *By Rev. N. Frothingham, D. D.*

XI. Anthem.

And will the great eternal God
On earth establish His abode?
And will He from His radiant throne
Avow our temples as His own?
These walls we to Thy honor raise?
Long may they echo to Thy praise —
And Thou, descending, fill the place
With choicest tokens of Thy grace.
Here let the great Redeemer reign,
With all the glories of His train;
Whilst power divine His word attends,
To conquer foes and cheer His friends.
Great King of glory come, and with Thy favor crown
This temple as Thy dome—this people as Thy own. Amen.

XII. Benediction.